

11/08/2026 Daily Current News

1. *Vande Mataram:*

Context: The Nation will mark its 80th Independence Day on August 15, 2026, with Prime Minister leading the celebrations from the historic Red Fort in Delhi. 2026 marks 150 years of 'Vande Mataram', the National Song that inspired millions during the freedom struggle will be sung from the ramparts of the Red Fort for the first time as a tribute to its enduring legacy.

About Vande Mataram:

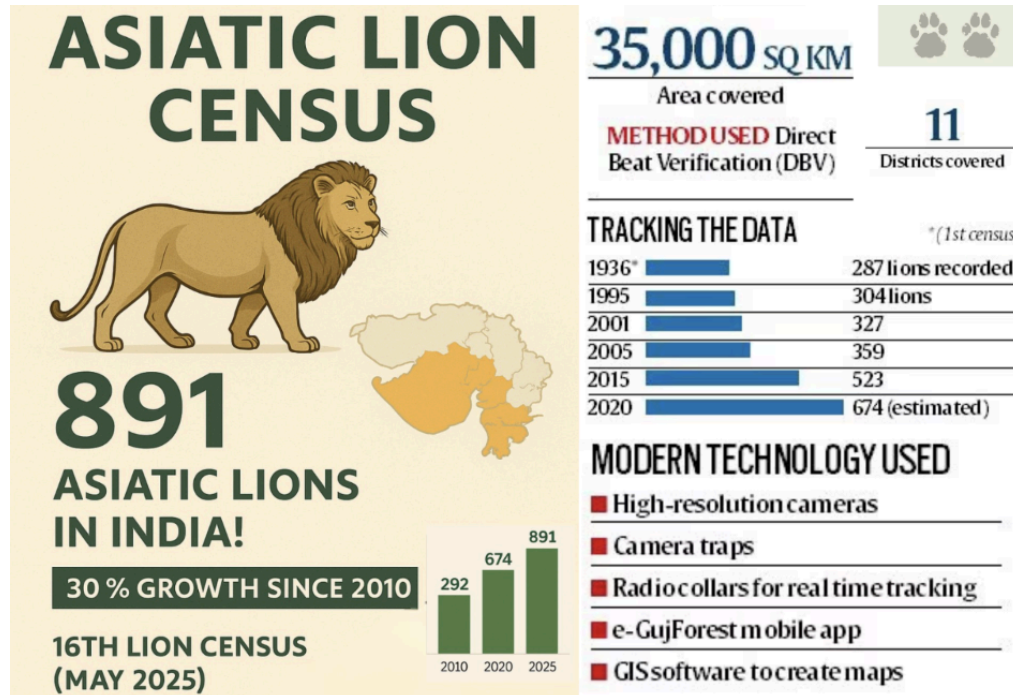
- ❖ The 150-year celebrations of Vande Mataram were inaugurated by Narendra Modi on 7 November 2025.
- ❖ The song was composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee on Akshaya Navami, 7 November 1875.
- ❖ It was first published in Bangadarshan and later included in the novel Anandamath (1882).
- ❖ The music for Vande Mataram was composed by Rabindranath Tagore.
- ❖ The song symbolizes unity, sacrifice, and devotion to the motherland.
- ❖ The first two verses were adopted as the National Song in 1937 by the Indian National Congress.
- ❖ On 24 January 1950, Rajendra Prasad declared it would be honoured equally with the National Anthem Jana Gana Mana.
- ❖ Though not mentioned in the Constitution, Article 51A(a) emphasizes respect for national symbols.
- ❖ Vande Mataram became a powerful slogan of resistance against British colonial rule.
- ❖ In 1896, Rabindranath Tagore first sang it at the Kolkata session of the Congress.
- ❖ The English daily Bande Mataram was started in 1906 by Bipin Chandra Pal, later joined by Sri Aurobindo.
- ❖ The song became a rallying cry during the Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi Movement.
- ❖ It was first used as a political slogan on 7 August 1905 in Calcutta protests.

2. *Asiatic Lion:*

Context: On World Lion Day 2026, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, celebrated India's remarkable journey in lion conservation and reaffirmed the country's unwavering commitment to protecting wildlife and biodiversity. In a post on social media, the Minister noted that the Asiatic Lion population has steadily increased from 523 in 2015 to 891 in 2025.

About Asiatic Lion:

- ❖ Habitat: Inhabits grasslands, savannas, dense scrub, and open woodlands.
- ❖ Range: Primarily found in Gir National Park, with Barda Wildlife Sanctuary emerging as a second habitat (both in Gujarat).
- ❖ IUCN Status: Vulnerable.
- ❖ Legal Protection: Schedule I & IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and Appendix I of CITES



3. Ozone layer:

Context: Scientists have detected an unusually high concentration of ozone in the upper atmosphere over the North Bay of Bengal. This unexpected finding is helping researchers better understand how air currents transport ozone through the stratosphere.

About Ozone layer and its depletion:

- ❖ Ozone (O_3) is a molecule made of three oxygen atoms and occurs naturally in the atmosphere.
- ❖ About 90% of atmospheric ozone is present in the stratosphere, mainly between 15–30 km above Earth.
- ❖ Stratospheric ozone forms the ozone layer, while tropospheric ozone near the ground is a harmful air pollutant and contributes to smog.
- ❖ The ozone layer was discovered in 1913 by Charles Fabry and Henri Buisson.
- ❖ The ozone layer absorbs about 97–99% of the Sun's harmful UV-B and UV-C radiation (roughly 200–315 nm), protecting life on Earth.
- ❖ Ozone thickness varies geographically and seasonally: it is generally thinner near the equator and thicker toward the poles, due mainly to atmospheric circulation and solar intensity.
- ❖ Most ozone is produced in the tropics when UV radiation splits oxygen molecules; stratospheric circulation then transports ozone toward higher latitudes.
- ❖ Ozone depletion is the thinning of the stratospheric ozone layer mainly due to chlorine- and bromine-containing ozone-depleting substances (ODS) released by human activities.
- ❖ Important ODS include CFCs, HCFCs, carbon tetrachloride, methyl chloroform, halons and methyl bromide. In the stratosphere, UV radiation releases chlorine/bromine, and one chlorine atom can destroy more than 100,000 ozone molecules.

- ❖ Volcanic eruptions can temporarily enhance ozone destruction by producing stratospheric aerosols, while severe seasonal ozone depletion over Antarctica produces the “ozone hole.” Significant, though less severe, depletion can also occur over the Arctic and parts of Europe.

4. *PAIMANA (Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring and Analytics for Nation-Building):*

Context: Efficient monitoring of infrastructure projects is essential for timely implementation, transparency and governance. To support this, PAIMANA (Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring and Analytics for Nation-Building) was launched on 25 September 2025 as a web-based platform for monitoring Central Sector infrastructure projects in India. The platform replaces the earlier OCMS-2006 (Online Computerized Monitoring System).

About PAIMANA:

- ❖ Developed by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), PAIMANA is used for monitoring ongoing Central Sector infrastructure projects costing ₹150 crore or more.
- ❖ It is a digital platform for monitoring infrastructure projects, particularly their implementation and progress.
- ❖ It uses technology, data and analytics to assess the status of projects and identify delays or bottlenecks.
- ❖ It helps in evidence-based decision-making by providing information on project progress, costs and implementation.
- ❖ The platform promotes greater transparency and accountability in the execution of infrastructure projects.
- ❖ PAIMANA has expanded its role to support infrastructure performance monitoring through a dedicated Performance Monitoring Dashboard.
- ❖ Launched on 16th April, 2026, the dashboard tracks infrastructure performance across major sub-sectors through a comprehensive set of indicators. It marks a significant advancement towards data-driven governance and evidence-based policymaking.

5. *Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (ABR):*

Context: Angry outbursts and tears of desperation swept the hillsides in the Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (ABR), particularly in Theni. In the last few weeks, the Forest Department has issued eviction notices to thousands of households on the Tamil Nadu side alleging they had encroached on forest land.

About Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (ABR):

- ❖ Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve (ABR) is located in the southern Western Ghats, spanning Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It was established in 2001 and included in UNESCO’s World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2016.
- ❖ It covers about 3,500 sq km, with elevations reaching up to 1,868 m, and consists of mountains, valleys, forests and river systems.
- ❖ It covers parts of Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam (Kerala) and Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari (Tamil Nadu).

- ❖ Important rivers originating in the region include Thamirabarani, Neyyar and Karamana, making it important for water resources and agriculture.
- ❖ The region has a tropical monsoon climate, with heavy rainfall supporting dense forests and high biodiversity.
- ❖ It is part of the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot and contains numerous endemic species; the reserve has about 2,254 plant species, including nearly 400 endemic species.
- ❖ Its fauna includes around 79 mammals, 337 birds, 88 reptiles and 45 amphibians; notable species include tiger, Asian elephant, Nilgiri tahr and lion-tailed macaque.
- ❖ Major vegetation types include tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen, moist deciduous, montane rainforests and shola-grassland ecosystems.
- ❖ The reserve acts as a genetic reservoir for economically important plants such as cardamom, pepper, nutmeg, jamun and plantain, and is known for medicinal plants such as Arogyapacha.
- ❖ Important protected areas within/associated with the reserve include Shendurney, Peppara and Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuaries and Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve.
- ❖ The Kani tribal community inhabits the region and possesses extensive traditional knowledge of medicinal plants, forest resources and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ APEDA facilitated the first-ever export of 1 Metric Tonne of Mustard Honey by Dergang Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) from Tripura to Dubai. The export marks a new milestone for the FPO and the region by creating an opportunity for local beekeepers and farmers to access international markets through organised export-oriented production.
- ☐ US Senate passed a bill (Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, 2026) to sanction Russia and key buyers of its petroleum products, including India. It has yet to be ratified in House of Representatives.
- ☐ Bank in a Box is a plug-and-play integrated banking platform launched by the Union Minister of Cooperation to provide Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) with core banking and modern banking facilities on a single platform. It enables banks to deploy and operate banking services efficiently, often through cloud-based technology, reducing costs and improving digital banking capabilities.
- ☐ Exercise Talisman Sabre 2027 is a major multinational military exercise led by Australia and the United States, scheduled from 9–22 August 2027. It aims to enhance joint operations, interoperability and combined planning among Indo-Pacific partner nations. India's enhanced participation was formally welcomed during the 2nd India-Australia Defence Ministers' Dialogue on 1 June 2026, co-chaired by Rajnath Singh and Richard Marles.
- ☐ Indian physicist Deepak Dhar was awarded the 2026 Dirac Medal by the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) on 8 August 2026, sharing it with Bernard Derrida, Marc Mézard and Haim Sompolinsky for their contributions to statistical mechanics. Established in 1985, the Dirac Medal is awarded annually on 8 August, the birth anniversary of physicist Paul Dirac, and carries a US\$5,000 prize. Statistical mechanics uses probability and statistical methods to understand systems containing large numbers of particles, including phase transitions and collective behaviour.

- ☐ A wildfire broke out on 3 August 2026 inside Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park in East Java, Indonesia, and affected the Gunung Bromo Watu Gede and Jantur areas. The fire later spread near the volcano's caldera, and emergency agencies deployed helicopters, fire trucks, and drones for containment.
- ☐ *Russula griseopurpurata*: New Mushroom Species Found in Meghalaya *Russula griseopurpurata* is a newly described mushroom species from India and belongs to the genus *Russula*, which includes about 2,000 species worldwide.
- ☐ Taiwan tests Internet 'throttling' for first time in war exercise. Taiwan slowed the mobile internet in a large swathe of the central part of the island on Monday for the first time during annual war games, simulating communication disruption in the event of a Chinese attack or natural disaster.
- ☐ India won 17 medals, including four gold, four silver and nine bronze, on the opening day of the U-23 Commonwealth Fencing Championship in Lagos, Nigeria.

Practice questions:

Objective questions:

Which of the following are in Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve?

- (a) Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve
- (b) Mudumalai, Sathyamangalam and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Silent Valley National Park
- (c) Kaundinya, Gundla Brahmeswaram and Papikonda Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Mukurthi National Park
- (d) Kawal and Sri Venkateswara Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Nagarjunasagar -Srisailem Tiger Reserve.

"Bank in a Box" recently launched is particularly associated with which category of institutions?

- (a) Regional Rural Banks
- (b) Small Finance Banks
- (c) Urban Cooperative Banks
- (d) Payments Banks

Russula griseopurpurata, recently described from India, belongs to which group?

- (a) Ferns
- (b) Lichens
- (c) Mushrooms
- (d) Algae

With reference to PAIMANA, consider the following statements:

1. It is developed by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation for monitoring Central Sector infrastructure projects.
2. It is applicable to ongoing infrastructure projects having a cost of ₹1500 crore or more.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

With reference to atmospheric ozone, consider the following statements:

1. Most stratospheric ozone is produced in tropical regions through photodissociation of oxygen molecules.
2. Stratospheric atmospheric circulation transports ozone towards higher latitudes.
3. Tropospheric ozone is a primary pollutant directly emitted in large quantities from automobiles.
4. Near-surface ozone contributes to photochemical smog.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

-----The END-----